

Barrington, Ill. - At the request of Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08), federal officials in charge of rail safety and policy visited the northwest suburban area today, to meet with local officials and discuss issues related to the Canadian National rail expansion.

Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo and Surface Transportation Board Chairman Daniel Elliott met with Bean, Barrington Village President and TRAC Co-Chairperson Karen Darch and other members of the TRAC coalition. This meeting follows a similar meeting between local officials and Chairman Elliott that was held at Bean's request last month.

"I commend Administrator Szabo and Chairman Elliott for taking the time to meet personally with local community leaders and see first-hand the impact this expansion is having and could have as the economy recovers and freight traffic increases," Bean said. "As our communities continue to seek redress and relief, it is critical that they have a clear understanding of the federal process and a chance for their concerns to be heard by federal authorities."

"I appreciated the opportunity to meet with Congresswoman Bean and members of the community and learn more about their concerns," said FRA Administrator Szabo.

"I visited with community leaders last month and found those meetings to be very informative," said STB Chairman Elliott. "I was happy to come back to Barrington with Administrator Szabo for another informative meeting with Congresswoman Bean and other local elected officials."

TRAC Co-Chair Karen Darch underscored the value of meeting with rail regulators during the oversight period. "While we remain optimistic that the federal courts will eventually agree with us that the environmental review process for this transaction was fatally flawed, we know that maintaining a productive dialogue with rail regulatory authorities is vital to insuring that CN live up to the mitigation mandates imposed upon it by the STB. We're most appreciative of Congresswoman Bean's efforts to bring the parties together," Darch said.

CN plans to increase rail traffic by 400 to 900 percent along the EJ&E line, which cuts through many suburban Chicago communities. Bean and local leaders have opposed the deal due to serious life-safety, traffic, and quality of life concerns.